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PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST...

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PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST

The Plumas National Forest was established by an Act of Congress on October 15, 1906. Included within its boundaries is the northern end of the Sierra Nevada Range and the southern end of the Cascade Range.

The gross area within the Forest boundary is 1,411,732 acres, 259,983 acres of which is private land. The Plumas Forest encompasses lands in Plumas, Lassen, Butte, Sierra, and Yuba Counties.

Elevations range from 1,000 feet to 8,377 feet above sea level. The land has many streams, deep canyons, lofty peaks, rich mountain valleys and meadows, and many lakes.

The Forest includes a 108-mile stretch of the Middle Fork of the Feather River, which was designated as a part of the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers in 1968. About 25,000 acres of public and private land lie adjacent to the river. Special management practices help preserve the river in its free flowing condition and protect its immediate environment for future generations.

The Pacific Crest Trail system, part of the National System of Recreation and Scenic Trails, traverses the heart of the Forest for a distance of about 80 miles. The entire route is marked with signs and is passable; however, plans call for relocating and reconstructing over two-thirds of the existing trail.

Pure water is an extremely important product of this Forest. The Plumas provides water to local communities, as well as to rivers and lakes. Some of the water from the Forest flows by canal into Silverwood Lake, nestled in the heart of the San Bernardino National Forest in Southern California, providing a tie between these two vastly contrasting National Forests.

In 1850, the first prospector visited the area. Four years later, the increased population justified the formation of Plumas County, carved out of Butte. Since miners required food and timber, farming, dairying, and raising cattle for beef started early in the area. The first commercial timber was harvested in 1906 under the watchful eye of the first Forest Supervisor Lou Barrett. A sustained flow of timber for man's use continues to be a primary product of the Plumas National Forest.

Grazing of sheep and cattle is an important business on the Forest, particularly in the eastern portion where there are many meadows and summer ranges. Recreation has boomed since the first public campground was constructed near Bucks Lake about 1920.

RECREATION

Recreation opportunities on the Plumas National Forest are limitless. Hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, water sports, and winter sports are among the many attractions.

Lakeside camping is available at Lake Davis, Frenchman, Little Grass Valley, and Antelope Reservoirs. These lakes offer good fishing, and boat ramps are provided at each.

The Lakes Basin Recreation Area has a beautiful setting for hikers. Over 50 jewel-like lakes are tucked away in granite pockets. The high spires and pinnacles of rock give the area an alpine appearance. A portion of the Pacific Crest Trail passes through this country.

The Middle Fork of the Feather River, one of the Nation's first Wild Rivers, has a placid beginning in the High Sierra Valley. It flows through the rugged Middle Fork Canyon in a series of falls and rapids, and finally empties into Oroville Reservoir. The opportunities for excellent trout fishing and other activities along the Middle Fork are as varied as the river itself. The upper limits have fairly easy access, while the lower stretches usually require an arduous hike.

A unique spot on the Forest is Feather Falls, the sixth highest waterfall in the World (640 feet). An overlook, reached by a three-mile trail, provides a spectacular view of the falls and surrounding area.

For motorists who enjoy scenery, the drive through the Feather River Canyon is spectacular, especially in the fall. Two interesting and primitive back road routes include the old Oroville-Quincy road, and the wagon road between Quincy and LaPorte. Both routes contain stretches of unsurfaced, slow-travel driving, but the exceptionally beautiful countryside makes it worth while.

Many small campgrounds, offering comparative solitude, are found throughout the Forest. Most of these camping areas are located near small lakes or streams. The Plumas offers Forest visitors a choice of 39 camping and 14 picnic areas.

Winter activity is mostly limited to general snow play. Snowmobile enthusiasts enjoy the many back country roads, valleys, and cross-country travel. There is one developed ski area in Plumas-Eureka State Park which is located in the southeastern part of the Forest.

FIRE

The Plumas National Forest experienced one of its dryest fire seasons in history during 1972. The total number of fires reached an all time high of 352. Lightning caused 255 fires; man caused 97 fires. In 1972, 2,552 acres were burned. Between 1968 and 1972, an average of 109 lightning and 82 man-caused fires were reported on the Plumas National Forest each year. The average yearly burned area during this five-year period was 830 acres.

Fire suppression efforts on the Plumas include full use of the helicopter for transporting firefighters and equipment and for dropping water and chemical retardant on fires. The use of this versatile machine, along with cooperative industry and local crews, has enabled the Forest to contain fires while they are still relatively small. Air tankers, too, are of prime importance in controlling wildfires. The organizing of fifteen 22-man crews from the Marysville area has not only strengthened available local firefighting manpower, but has provided additional firefighters for the entire California Region.

During 1972, nearly six miles of fuelbreaks were constructed by labor from fire crews throughout the Forest. The fuelbreak program is being intensified as a future aid in controlling large fires.

ENGINEERING

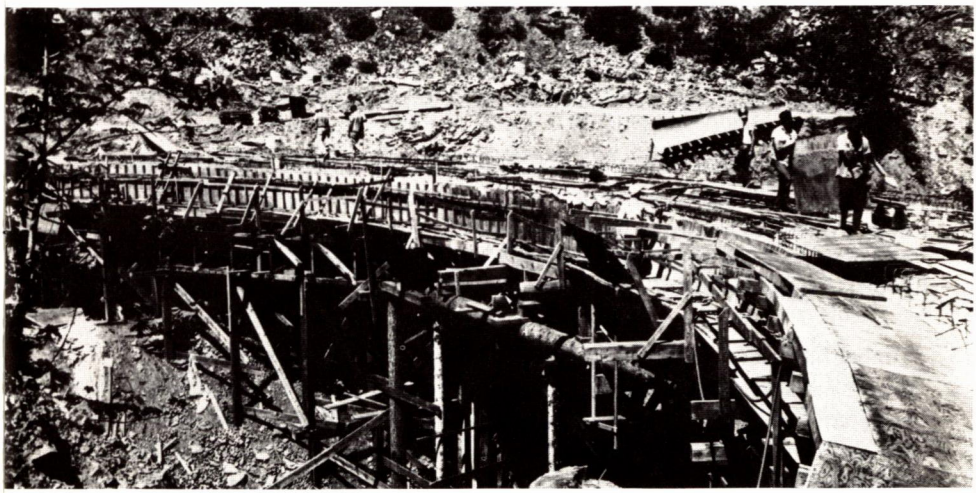
The Plumas National Forest engineering organization provides the Forest land managers with information necessary to help manage and protect the Forest.

The Engineers maintain about 3,500 miles of roads, 320 miles of trails, and 257 bridges. This road system, together with about 127 miles of Forest highways maintained by the State or Counties, offers access for protection and management, while meeting the needs of Forest visitors.

About 100 miles of road are constructed or reconstructed each year. This construction is carefully planned and controlled to prevent resource damage. Transportation systems must also be planned for future resource activities, including timber harvest. The planning process consists of reconnaissance; soil sampling; environmental and economic analysis; and, finally, preconstruction survey design and drafting.

Other aspects of the Forest transportation system include negotiating cooperative agreements with the States, Counties, other agencies, and timber and land holding companies regarding use, maintenance, and capital recovery. Engineering is also responsible for obtaining right-of-way information, maintaining the Forest sign program, and administering the survey program of searching and reestablishing section corners.

Additional engineering functions call for inspecting, maintaining, and constructing buildings, lookout towers, dams, water sanitation systems, campgrounds, and other facilities required for the operation of the National Forest. These developments provide utility, enjoyment, and resource protection, while assuring a safe place to work and visit.



TIMBER

The objectives in managing the timber stands on this National Forest are to help meet the Nation's need for timber, and to protect and improve the quality of air, water, soil, and natural beauty of the timber production zones. Timber management on the Plumas considers all other resources. Special harvesting techniques, such as helicopter logging, are designed to protect soil, water, recreation, and scenic values.

The Plumas National Forest pioneered helicopter logging in the United States on the Greenville Ranger District during the winter of 1970. Conventional methods of logging—using tractors, rubber-tire skidders and horses—have also been used on the Plumas.

Logging methods are keyed to topography, timber stand density, and soil fragility. Tractors and rubber-tire skidders can be used on gentle slopes. Dense stands on steeper slopes are harvested by line logging. Helicopters and balloon logging are used on steep slopes with lighter stands.

The Plumas National Forest is a major producer of Christmas trees. Trees from lands in Plumas County provide over one-third of the Christmas trees grown in California. Nearly 45,000 Christmas trees, valued at $58,000, were cut from the Forest in 1972. These trees are cut from crowded stands to allow the remaining trees to grow better and faster.

Timber harvest on the Plumas National Forest is based on a scientific timber management plan. Every ten years, growing timber is inventoried to determine growth and conditions of the stand. From this information, harvesting goals are set. The Forest is currently developing a new ten-year management plan.

RANGE

The Plumas National Forest land contains 82 range allotments and special use pastures, which are intermingled with numerous private ownerships. Contained within these allotments are 783,000 acres of National Forest land and 261,000 acres of private land. A net area of 303,072 acres of National Forest and 146,552 acres of private land has been classified as usable range open to livestock grazing.

In calendar year 1972 over 5,000 cattle and 3,300 sheep were permitted to graze on National Forest lands, and over 2,200 cattle and 1,000 sheep were permitted to graze on private grazing land administered by the Forest Service. In addition, about 1,200 head of horses, owned by recreationists and ranchers, were used on National Forest lands during the year.

A Range Allotment Management Plan has been prepared for each allotment with written instructions and a map sent to each permittee showing range improvements, grazing areas, and management problems. Rotation grazing is followed for each allotment wherever practical. A number of allotments have improved considerably as a result of the range improvement program and improved management practices. Increased numbers of livestock and longer grazing seasons have been allowed on several of these allotments as a result of this improvement.

WILDLIFE

The Plumas National Forest provides summer range for four deer herds. The Doyle deer herd spends its summers on the east side of the Forest, and migrates to Lassen County, California, and Washoe County, Nevada, during the winter. The Sloat deer herd not only summers on the Plumas but spends winters at the lower elevations in the central portion of the Forest. The Bucks Mountain and Mooretown herds spend the summer at the higher elevations on the west side range and migrate to the lower elevations in the foothills near Oroville for the winter. Habitat Management Plans have been completed for each herd. The Forest habitat improvement program has been directed toward improving forage conditions for deer, where practical, through direct habitat improvement and coordination with other resource management.

A Fisheries Habitat Management Plan has been completed and is being carried out as funding permits. Special effort is made to locate all Bald Eagle and Osprey nesting areas and to coordinate all other Forest management activities to protect and preserve these nesting areas.

Multiple use management and the resultant coordination of other resources to the needs of wildlife has resulted in benefits to wildlife. The protection of live streams from logging and road construction, creation of openings, range water developments, controlled livestock grazing, fire lane construction, and clearing of dense brushfields for reforestation have all provided immeasurable benefits to many of the wildlife species found on the Plumas.

MINERALS AND MINING CLAIM OCCUPANCY

Mineral development on National Forest land is authorized under the 1872 mining laws and is one of the many resources available from these lands. Currently, large-scale exploration activities are being undertaken for copper and other valuable minerals.

Many mining claims are not used for mining purposes, but as a summer home or recreation cabin site under the guise of a mining claim. Such use is not authorized under the mining laws. In order to correct this situation, and at the same time properly manage the National Forests, we examine all mining claims with structures. As of last year there were 412 habitable structures and 252 sheds, shops, and uninhabitable structures on mining claims. In each case the mining claimant is contacted and the claim examined for mineral values. If no valuable mineral is found, the claimant is given an opportunity to remove his structures or authorize the Forest Service to dispose of them. If the claimant feels his mining claim is valid, then a hearing is scheduled with the Bureau of Land Management.

If the subsequent decision is that the claim is invalid, the claimant is again given the opportunity to remove the structures. If he refuses, a complaint may be filed in Federal Court for occupancy trespass. In either case the Forest Service disposes of the structures only with the written consent of the owner or a court order. The objective is to prevent unauthorized occupancy of National Forest land and encourage proper development of the mineral resource.

EROSION CONTROL

Plans for a gully stabilization and erosion control project are complete for the Dry Flat area, located southwest of Antelope Reservoir. Initial work was begun in the Spring of 1972, with the construction of fences and some gully control structures.

Crews employed under a manpower employment program installed erosion control structures on Little Schneider Creek, near Meadow Valley, and on streams tributary to Antelope Reservoir. Plans have also been drawn up for the maintenance of erosion control dams in the Last Chance Creek area.

SOILS AND WATERSHED

An inventory and map of soil, water, and vegetation resources, and an evaluation of management alternatives for Slate Creek and Canyon Creek was completed for the two watersheds.

A two-year water quality survey of the Middle Fork Feather River was completed in 1972. Data collected during this study establishes the present water quality of the River, which will be used as a base line for setting water quality standards. Several Federal, State, and County agencies participated in the collection and analysis of this data. A similar study was initiated on the North Fork Feather River this year.

An inventory of water uses, revealed that there are 650 locations of water use on the Forest. Water is used by the Forest Service, summer home owners, permittees, and stock. Total annual local use is estimated to be 2,000-acre feet.

In a normal year the water yield from the Plumas National Forest, within the Feather River Basin, is enough to fill Oroville Reservoir to 60 percent of its capacity. Likewise, flow from the National Forest into the North Yuba River Basin would fill the new Bullards Bar Reservoir to 25 percent of capacity. The total annual water yield of the Forest is almost 3 million-acre feet.

SOILS

Soil survey maps have been completed for the Bucks Lake and French Creek area. Both areas produce large timber volumes, but include fragile and highly erodible zones. More than 60 inches of rain falls on these granitic, timbered areas every year. The soils maps will help to avoid high risk erosion problems while constructing roads, and will aid in the prediction of the best sites to plant and manage timber. Soil surveys also aid in the prediction of good sites for foundations of buildings, septic tanks, and other types of structures. These analyses are being made along with timber growth potential and erosion hazard ratings in the land use planning and environmental quality study.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION – INFORM AND INVOLVE

As part of the Conservation Education Program, four environmental education workshops, involving over 150 teachers, were conducted by the Plumas during the past year. Two more workshops—one in Quincy and another in the valley—are planned for the near future. The Forest has trained some 20 employees to help put on these teacher workshops Teachers who complete these workshops transmit to their students a special process-approach to learning; 150 teachers reach about 4,500 children in just one year.

To increase public involvement in management decisions, the Forest has conducted public meetings on such subjects as the Bucks Lake Management Planning and resource management on the Greenville Ranger District. The Plumas expects to continue to expand the public's share in the decision-making process on the Forest.

The Penny Pines cooperative reforestation program is very popular on the Plumas. In this program, many of the tree plantations on the Forest are supported from funds contributed by women's clubs, garden clubs, 4-H groups, and scouting organizations.

In recognizing the increased public interest in the management of the National Forests, the Plumas has added a Public Information Officer to the staff who serves as information officer for the entire Forest. Due to the media contacts and the large number of people in the valley, the information officer is stationed at the Oroville Ranger Station. In addition to fulfilling portions of the information and education program on the Plumas National Forest, the information officer helps keep Plumas Forest employees better informed on current forest programs and public issues. The activation of the Plumas Public Information Officer indicates an increasingly vital need with the Forest – that of keeping an environmentally-aware public better informed and involved in Forest Service direction and decision making.

FORES
LOG SCA
Loaf

SAWMILL PEAK PLANTATION
THIS BURNED AREA WAS REFORESTED BY
THE U. S. FOREST SERVICE IN 1969.
"PENNY PINE" FUNDS ASSISTED IN THIS
WORK. DONATED BY THESE COOPERATORS.
PLUMAS National Forest
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MULTIPLE USE PLANNING

Special teams, composed of foresters, engineers, soil scientists, hydrologists, and landscape architects, were assigned to carry out special land use studies in the Plumas National Forest. Detailed field surveys were carried out by these teams in the Bucks Lake Basin and in the French Creek Basin in 1971-72. Alternative plans for management of public lands at Bucks Lake were presented at public meetings, and written or spoken recommendations were received.

Special studies in cooperation with other Federal agencies, and State and local agencies were also conducted at Lake Davis and in the Sierra Valley.

REVENUE FROM FOREST ACTIVITIES (July 1971 through June 1972)

Timber (261 million board feet harvested)	$12,023,372
Grazing	18,170
Land Use (water transmission lines; residences; pastures, fences, etc.)	10,807
Admission and User Fees (campgrounds, boat ramps)	66,071
Recreation (summer homes, organization camps, boat houses)	20,587
Power (transmission lines, water power projects)	3,544
Minerals (borrow pits, fill material)	1,010
TOTAL	$12,143,561

RECEIPTS TO COUNTIES – AN ALL-TIME HIGH

In 1912, Congress passed a law requiring that 25 percent of National Forest receipts be returned to the Counties where National Forests are located. The purpose of this money is support for the local schools and and County roads, in lieu of property taxes that would have been paid had the land not been in Federal ownership. During Fiscal Year 1972, Yuba, Lassen, Sierra, Butte, and Plumas Counties shared $3,035,892.73 in receipts from the Plumas National Forest. The majority of this money came from timber harvesting, special-use permits on recreation and power sites, and from sheep and cattle that grazed under permit. A breakdown by county shows that Yuba got $72,061.72; Lassen - $99,085.85; Sierra - $104,894.43; Butte - $196,271.52; and Plumas - $2,563,579.21, the highest of any County in California.

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Richard D. Carson – Lands Officer

Miles J. Gulick – Recreation, Range & Wildlife Officer

Gregory C. Margason – Forest Engineer

Janet M. Lambert – Public Information Officer

DISTRICT RANGERS

Edwin L. Angwin – Beckwourth Ranger District

John M. Bryant – Greenville Ranger District

John N. Coburn – LaPorte Ranger District

Clinton E. Tripp – Milford Ranger District

William E. Turpin – Oroville Ranger District

Douglas W. Hayden – Quincy Ranger District

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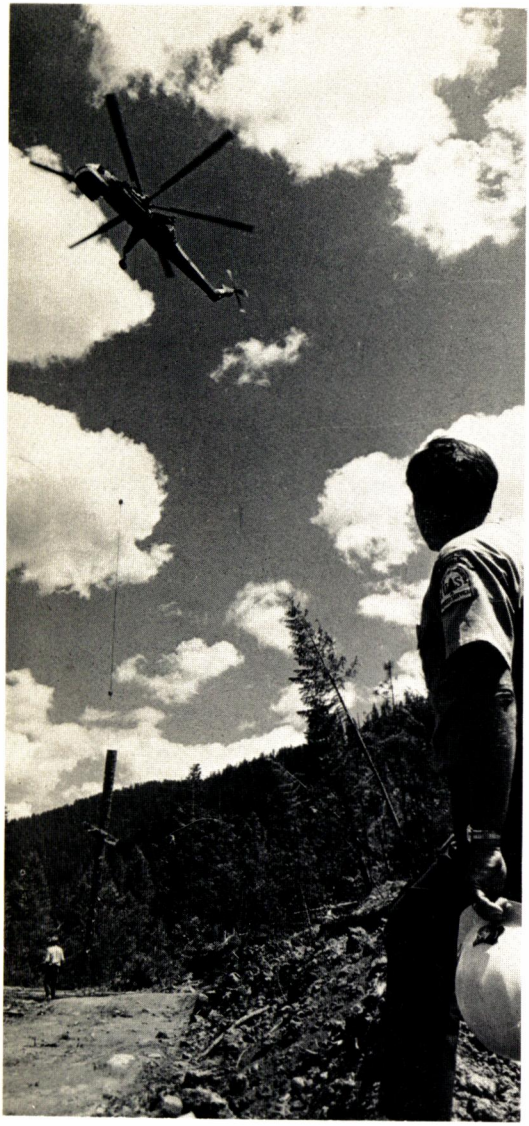

FOREST SERVICE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CALIFORNIA REGION